INSTRUCTIONS

TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF TUAM.

By JOSIAH HORT,

LATE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF TUAM,

AT HIS

PRIMARY VISITATION

HELD THERE

ON WEDNESDAY, JULY VIII, MDCCXLIX

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THE Perſon who cauſed this CHARGE to be reprinted, deſigned it more particularly for the Uſe of the younger Clergy, and heartily wiſhes they may carefully attend to the Directions and Admonitions contained therein. And therefore, to render it more extenſively uſeful, the Diſtributors earneſtly requeſt that every one, when he hath read this Book, would be ſo kind as to lend it to his Neighbour.

43-4-6-58

INSTRUCTIONS

TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE of TUAM, &c.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE providence of God having called me to the government of this dioceſe, I have judged it not improper for me, to communicate my thoughts to you with regard to the execution of your miniſterial office, in order to the edification and ſalvation of the ſouls reſpectively committed to your charge.

To this end I ſhall reduce what I have to ſay to you, under two general heads.

The *firſt* relates to your conduct, in the actual performance of divine offices in the houſe of God.

The *ſecond* relates to your behaviour at large towards your pariſhioners.

In ſpeaking to the former, I ſhall confine myſelf to theſe four branches of your office, namely, preaching, praying, catechiſing, and expounding the holy ſcriptures.

I ſhall begin with *preaching*, which is one of thoſe means appointed by our Saviour, for the enlightening the minds, awakening the conſciences, and reforming the manners of your hearers. In order to anſwer theſe great ends, ſome degree of ſkill and addreſs, as well as of pains and ſtudy, will be requiſite: And I ſhall, for the ſake chiefly of ſuch of you as have not been long in holy orders, communicate my ſentiments with regard to the *ſubject*, the *compoſition*, the *ſtile*, and the *pronunciation* of a ſermon.

The ſubject of a ſermon ought to be ſome point of doctrine that is neceſſary for a chriſtian to know; or ſome duty that is neceſſary for him to practiſe in order to his ſalvation.

I ſpeak

I ſpeak this in oppoſition to ſubtil queſtions and curious ſpeculations that are above the common level of the auditory, and which have often no other effect than to diſquiet the minds and conſciences of thoſe who do not rightly underſtand them; and if they pleaſe curious and itching ears, yet will edify no man in faith and a good life.

Upon this occaſion I would recommend it, to young preachers eſpecially, to compoſe a ſet of ſermons upon the chief articles of the chriſtian religion, according to their natural order and dependence. By this means they will improve their own knowledge at the ſame time that they are teaching their hearers: But this ſhould be done in the plaineſt and eaſieſt manner, laying aſide metaphyſical niceties and the jargon of the ſchools, and eſpecially avoiding to explain myſteries; for this is generally giving words and terms without meaning; and no man has ever ſucceeded in the attempt.

When a uſeful ſubject is choſen, the next care of the preacher is to find out ſome proper and pertinent text, that will naturally lead him to purſue his ſubject, and that will yield him thoſe doctrines and practical de-

ductions which he had in his view, without force and torture. For want of this, the whole operation will be laborious, obſcure, and perplexed to the compoſer; and the diſcourſe will be void of that perſpicuity, which is neceſſary to engage the attention of the hearers. And I am ſure there is no want of ſuch texts upon all ſubjects, in the Bible.

It has given me diſguſt to obſerve in ſome preachers a certain affectation of chooſing ſuch texts as appear remote and foreign to their ſubject, that by this means they may have opportunity of ſhewing their wit and ingenuity in fetching that out of a text, which nobody imagined could be in it. They would do ſomething miraculous, like bringing water out of a dry rock in the wilderneſs, in order to ſurprize their auditory; but this will ever give diſtaſte to good judges, and there is no occaſion for putting one text upon the rack, to make it ſpeak that which would naturally and eaſily ariſe out of another that might as well have been choſen in the room of it.

When a uſeful ſubject, and a pertinent text are choſen, the next work is *compoſition*, or the ranging of ſuch thoughts as naturally

ariſe

ariſe upon the ſubject, into a convenient order and method; this will be the plan of his diſcourſe, and the compoſer will reap no ſmall advantages from this practice.

Firſt, As it will help him to enter all his looſe and detached thoughts in their proper places, for want of which ſome of them may eſcape him when he comes to the finiſhing part.

Secondly, It will lead him to break his ſermon into heads, which is abſolutely neceſſary for giving ſtrength and clearneſs to the whole, and for engaging the attention of the audience; which will be ſoon blunted and tired with hearing an harangue where all the parts are run into one general maſs, and nothing diſtinctly and ſpecially offered to the underſtanding.

Thirdly, The memory of the hearers will be greatly relieved; for a ſermon thus broken into particular heads will be better imprinted, and more eaſily recollected by reaſon of the dependence and connection of the parts, where one draws another after it like the links of a chain.

And *laſtly*, It will give the preacher an opportunity of interſperſing apt texts of

holy ſcripture for the ſupport, or illuſtration of every particular head.

There may indeed be a faulty extreme on this hand; for I have heard a ſermon that has been ſo overloaded with texts of ſcripture, that the thread of the reaſoning was in a manner loſt, and the whole looked like a piece of rich patch-work, without any ground appearing at the bottom. But the other extreme, of a penury of ſacred texts, prevails too much in our modern and refined compoſitions, which for that reaſon may rather be called *orations* than ſermons.

A due medium therefore ought to be obſerved in this caſe; but of the two, the latter extreme is moſt blameable; for a ſermon will appear lean and unſatisfying to a religious palate, when it is not ſufficiently larded with ſcripture, but the whole is made to reſt on the reaſonings of the preacher, unſupported by the authority of God's word.

By this means likewiſe he will become an expert *textuary*, which is the firſt excellency of a chriſtian divine; and the people will occaſionally be made acquainted with the holy ſcriptures.

Now

Now this is what I call a *ſermon*, in contradiſtinction to an *oration*, which by one uniform flow of eloquence, without proper breaks and diviſions, glides like a ſmooth ſtream over the ſoul, leaving no traces behind it. The word thus delicately ſown, may, like a conſort of muſic, delight the ear while it laſts, but dies with the ſound, and the hearer will carry little home, beſides a remembrance that he was ſweetly entertained.

The effect of this will, where there are any kind of talents for it, be a *good ſtile*; by which I would be underſtood to mean *That ſimplicity and propriety of language, which clearly conveys the ſenſe of the ſpeaker into the mind of the hearer.* When, therefore, by the method before preſcribed, the preacher is become maſter of his ſubject, and has ranged all his materials fitly, fit words and expreſſions will readily offer themſelves to anſwer to his clear ideas; for nothing perplexes the *ſtile*, but a confuſed and perplexed manner of thinking.

He therefore who would convince and perſuade his hearers, ſhould above all things aim at that perſpicuity and ſimplicity, which

are the greateſt ornaments of language: Whereas, on the contrary, a tawdry ſtile, garniſhed with flowers of rhetoric, and flights of fancy, which are incident to young preachers, makes only a bright confuſion, that glares upon the mind without enlightening it.

As to the *doctrinal* part of a ſermon, the ſtile cannot be too plain and chaſte, though it need not deſcend to be baſe and vulgar, (for there is a wide difference between theſe two) becauſe it is addreſſed to the underſtanding; but as the *practical part* is deſigned to move the affections and paſſions, the ſtile may riſe, and grow warm with ſome heightenings of imagination, the better to anſwer that purpoſe.

I have only two ſhort remarks to add on this head. The firſt relates to the *introduction*, the ſecond to the *concluſion* of a ſermon.

As to the former, if an introduction be neceſſary, it ſhould always be ſhort, pertinent, and leading as ſoon as may be to the main ſubject of the diſcourſe. If the text needs any light from what goes before and follows it, this ſhould be collected, and brought to bear upon the text with the utmoſt

moſt brevity and clearneſs; for people are naturally impatient to know what the miniſter would be at, and to have him take his main buſineſs in hand. When I hear a preacher ſet out with a general preamble, that has no immediate relation to his text, and can never carry him to it but by a mighty circumference, I eaſily conclude with myſelf what I am to expect in the ſequel of the diſcourſe.

With regard to the concluſion of a ſermon, it ſhould be always practical, and perſuaſive to a good life; it ſhould conſiſt of exhortations and motives proper to enforce ſuch duties and virtues as may pertinently ariſe from the doctrines and poſitions before laid down. For the great end of preaching is to make men better: Mere knowledge put into the head, if it does not penetrate to the heart, and from thence diffuſe itſelf into the life and converſation, becomes not only uſeleſs, but hurtful, as it will turn to a man's greater condemnation.

I ſhall diſmiſs this general head with ſome remarks upon the ſubject of *pronunciation* or *elocution*. And here I muſt obſerve to you, that no one manner of pronunciation will

befit

befit every ſermon, nor every part of the ſame ſermon, but that it muſt be diverſified according to the nature of every period; it is impoſſible therefore to give preciſe rules where ſo great a variety of circumſtances will ariſe, which require a different modification of voice and action; but every preacher muſt, in a good degree, be left to the direction of his own judgment, and the beſt examples.

All that I ſhall therefore attempt under this head, is to propoſe ſome general rules that will extend to all caſes, and that may be of uſe for correcting ſome common faults and miſtakes.

The firſt is, to pronounce every word and ſyllable diſtinctly, and to beware of ſinking at the cloſe of the period. This is undoubtedly the firſt and chiefeſt excellence of pronunciation, becauſe the very end of ſpeaking is ſo far loſt, as it is not diſtinctly heard.

I would not be here underſtood to recommend that heavy and phlegmatic delivery that retails out words by their ſyllables; for this is more properly to be called *ſpelling* than ſpeaking, and is apt to tire men's patience and lull them to ſleep; but I mean that *articulate expreſſion*, with reſts and pauſes properly

properly interpoſed, which ſhall break, and diſtinguiſh the parts of a period according to the ſenſe; and herein conſiſts the propriety and beauty of elocution, which both ſpeaker and hearer will ſenſibly enjoy.

This rule is calculated for the cure of two faults that are not unfrequent; one is a *thick* and *confuſed delivery*, which runs ſyllables and words into one maſs, ſo that the ear cannot well ſeparate them, and the hearer is forced to make up the ſenſe by conjecture. The other is a *rapidity* of ſpeech, which runs off too faſt to impreſs any diſtinct idea on the mind, by which means both the pleaſure and profit of a ſermon are in great meaſure loſt. A little time and practice will certainly cure this fault, where there is no natural defect in the organs.

The *ſecond* rule I would mention is, to be careful not to exceed the compaſs of the voice. There is a certain *ne plus ultra* to the organs of ſpeech in every man, and his own *feeling* alone can teach him where it lies; if he goes beyond this, his pronunciation will be harſh, unmuſical, and diſagreeable both to himſelf and to his hearers, who cannot receive with pleaſure what they perceive he delivers

delivers with pain and violence; beſides, that it is impoſſible for him duly to temper and govern his voice under theſe unnatural ſtrainings and efforts.

It is a great miſtake to imagine that a voice muſt needs be well heard, merely becauſe it is *loud*. This is indeed a noble foundation for art and ſkill to work upon, but without the aid of theſe, it is often *ſwallowed* up and loſt in itſelf.

A moderate ſtrength of voice, with a due articulation of words, and diſtinction of pauſes, will go further, even in a large congregation, than the *thunder* of an unſkilful tongue; and this is that *Suaviloquentia*, that mellowneſs and ſweetneſs of ſpeaking, ſo much praiſed in ſome of the *Roman* orators, in oppoſition to the ruſticity of noiſy declaimers.

Let me here add, by way of caution, the danger of forcing and ſtraining the internal organs. I wiſh I were not an unhappy example of this kind, and that I did not to this day feel the ſad effects of making too violent efforts in the pulpit, many years ago: From my own experience therefore let me adviſe young preachers, who have not the moſt robuſt lungs, to have recourſe to art

and

and management, rather than to force, for ſupplying that defect.

The *third* rule I would recommend to you, is, to obſerve one *even* and *uniform* manner of pronunciation; I would not be here underſtood to mean, that a preacher is to confine himſelf to one ſimple *note* or ſound, or to one degree of *time* and *motion*, from the beginning to the end of his diſcourſe, for this is that *monotonia*, or *una quædam ſpiritus ac ſoni intentio*, which the great teacher of *Roman* oratory explodes. It would be moſt abſurd to do this, unleſs every thought, and every occaſion were perfectly alike. The ſpirit and beauty, and I may ſay the very eſſence of pronunciation, lies in proper *emphaſes* and accents, and in varying the *notes* and *times* purſuant to the diverſity of ſentiments and occaſions.

But I am levelling this rule againſt that *ſubſultory* way of delivery that riſes like a ſtorm in one part of the period, and preſently ſinks into a dead calm that will ſcarce reach the ear. I allow that elevations, and ſoftenings of the voice, judiciouſly managed, are both ornamental and uſeful, but thoſe ſudden ſtarts and exploſions are moſt ungraceful,

graceful, and unbecoming the gravity of the pulpit; and are of no uſe, that I can think of, unleſs it be to ſtartle a hearer that happens to be aſleep; and the other extreme of *ſinking* below the ear, is ſtill more ridiculous; for words which cannot be heard, may as well not be ſpoken.

The *fourth* and laſt general rule I would ſuggeſt, is, to diſtinguiſh carefully between the *doctrinal* and *practical* part of the diſcourſe, in the manner of your pronunciation. The intention of the doctrinal part being to enlighten the underſtanding, and to lead it to the knowledge of truth, by cool reaſoning and argumentation; all that is proper and neceſſary here, is that ſimplicity of accent and emphaſis, which may ſerve to point out where the force of the argument lies, and no man, who is maſter of his ſubject, can greatly err in this part.

But the *practical* part of a ſermon requires a very different conduct; for the mind having been before ſufficiently enlightened, and the nature and obligation of virtue clearly proved, the intention is *now* to perſuade the *will* to embrace it; to which end the paſſions are to be excited to come in to aſſiſt the reaſon. And here it is that the *pathetic*

allurements

allurements of voice will be uſeful and proper. For experience ſhews us the power of the outward ſenſes in this caſe; and particularly that *action* and *motion* ſkilfully preſented to the eye, and *muſical ſounds* received by the ear, produce wonderful effects on our paſſions and affections. It is therefore neceſſary, when your deſign is to raiſe fear or hope, joy or ſorrow, love or hatred, to vary the action and pronunciation from cool and ſedate, to that which is more warm and moving; in order to touch the ſpring of that paſſion which you would make uſe of to anſwer your end.

To deſcend to particulars in this caſe is impoſſible, becauſe the variety is infinite. The ſimple accents required in reaſoning are few and eaſy, and good ſenſe alone will direct theſe; but the various modulations of the voice which render tone and cadence harmonious, are talents of quite another kind: For theſe being in reality nothing but different notes in the ſcale of Muſic, require a muſical ear to form and direct them; and where this natural gift is wanting, the preacher will fall into diſcords, and only expoſe himſelf by his attempt.

For this reaſon, the ſafeſt way is generally, of the two extreams, to avoid that of running into too much *tone* and cadence; his defect on this ſide will, at the worſt, only not pleaſe, but an error on the other ſide will diſturb and diſpleaſe; and it may moreover carry the appearance of affectation and ſelf-opinion, which will expoſe him to contempt and cenſure.

I COME next to the SECOND branch of your office in the church, and that is READING THE PUBLIC PRAYERS; and I do aſſure you, there is no little ſkill required to do this as it ought to be done. I call it indeed *reading* the prayers, in compliance with the common phraſe; but ſpeaking properly, prayers ought to be *prayed*, and not *read*.

There is a certain propriety of accent, cadence and geſture, that befits the ſolemnity and ſerioufneſs of devotion; and where this is duly obſerved, the miniſter will find it a great help both to warm his own heart, and to draw out the attention and affections of the congregation. I do allow that prayer is a ſpiritual duty, and is properly the action of the ſoul: But experience ſhews us to be ſo made and compounded, as that our ſouls receive great impreſſions and changes from our-

our outward ſenſes. And therefore the miniſter ſhould chooſe thoſe accents and geſtures that are moſt apt and proper to excite his own devotion, as well as that of the people; he ſhould pray to their *eyes*, and pray to their *ears*, as the readieſt way to affect their hearts.

But he muſt at the ſame time carefully avoid *theatrical* accents and geſtures; all affectation is offenſive to good judges; but that of the *theatre* is of all others the moſt unbecoming the houſe of God, and will diſguſt ſerious perſons. And yet if accents and diverſification of voice be wholly rejected, the prayers will ſeem cold and lifeleſs, the attention will languiſh, and the devotion loſe its ſpirit and fervor.

There is likewiſe a due medium to be obſerved in the *time* and *movement* of prayers; if they are read too faſt, they cannot impreſs the ſoul with due ſentiments and affections as the miniſter proceeds; on the other hand, *ſlow* and *heavy* reading will make the work dull and tireſome: and the impatient hearer will be apt to let looſe his thoughts to wander upon foreign ſubjects, or perhaps compoſe himſelf to reſt.

So

So that it requires ſome degree of judgment to ſteer between theſe extreams; and the reading of the public prayers is an art which all clergymen ſhould ſet themſelves to acquire by ſtudy and practice, and by copying after the beſt examples.

And yet I fear that it is too much neglected by thoſe who are *newly ordained*; and that when they come firſt into the deſk, they ſtrike at random and without any regard to propriety, into a certain manner of reading, which every body obſerves to be wrong but themſelves: Time and uſe will ſoon render this familiar; and as they never diſcover the fault, it becomes a habit, and they never think of correcting it afterwards.

It is indeed difficult to change a bad *manner*; but difficult things may be done, and often muſt be done. And to make this point more eaſy, I will give you one ſhort rule which may be of uſe both to ſuch clergymen as are yet to form their manner, and to thoſe who have habituated themſelves to an improper one; and it is this: Let a miniſter, when he opens his book, poſſeſs his ſoul with this thought; *That he is going to addreſs himſelf to the great Majeſty of Heaven and Earth, who knows all his thoughts, and beholds all his actions*;

actions; and that he is in the immediate preſence of this adorable Being, who is very jealous of his honour; I ſay, let him poſſeſs his ſoul duly with this conſideration, and he will naturally fall into all the proprieties of prayer.

THE THIRD branch of your office is that of public CATECHISING.

The compilers of our liturgy acted very prudently in making the church catechiſm ſhort and ſummary, for fear of overburdening the memory, and rendering it diſtaſteful and irkſome. For this reaſon they did not ſupport the doctrines and duties there laid down, with proofs out of the holy ſcripture, taking it for granted, that this part would be ſupplied by the paſtors of the church: This has accordingly been done by many of our biſhops and learned divines in their printed expoſitions of the church catechiſm; deſcending to many particular queſtions and anſwers which naturally branch out from the general heads of that ſummary.

Among theſe I muſt mention and recommend one in particular, compoſed by that moſt excellent prelate (now with God) who was my immediate predeceſſor in this dioceſe and province, in whoſe ſteps I beſeech God to give me grace to tread.

With

With regard to children, the chief uſe of catechiſms is to treaſure up the materials of knowledge in their memories, though they may perhaps enter very little into the ſenſe of them: But as their underſtandings ripen with time, and their appetite for knowledge increaſes, it will be no ſmall advantage that they have the words and ſentences ready ſtored up for uſe; for they will eaſily put ſenſe to them hereafter, and then it is that a more copious expoſition becomes ſeaſonable and neceſſary; however no pains ſhould be ſpared for enlightening them at preſent according to their capacities.

And I am afraid that too many of your pariſhioners who are of mature age, and even ſome who are advanced in years, *have need to be taught what are the firſt principles of the oracles of God.* Shame will hinder ſuch from coming to be catechiſed like children, but that ſhame will be covered by your putting in practice the method I am recommending; for light and knowledge will be obliquely conveyed into their minds, and you will, by inſtructing children in their preſence, inſtruct them at the ſame time without expoſing their ignorance.

In

In ſuch pariſhes as afford a ſufficient auditory at the evening ſervice, this work may be then moſt conveniently performed, till the ſhort days come in; but where the pariſhioners lie remote from the church, the morning will be the fitteſt time. It will indeed prolong the ſervice for half an hour; but they who come to worſhip God but once in ſeven days, may look upon this as an eaſy compoſition; and if the miniſter ſhould not grudge his pains, it will be hard if they ſhould grudge their time, when they have no worldly buſineſs upon their hands.

If you ſhould at the ſame time take occaſion to explain and enforce the doctrines of *proteſtantiſm*, and of the *eſtabliſhed church*, it might be of great uſe to fortify your people, and prevent apoſtacies, and perhaps to bring over ſuch as may have the curioſity to be your hearers. And to ſpeak the truth, there is no other way of effecting this properly upon reaſonable creatures and chriſtians, than the way of reaſoning and conviction. Coercive laws may reſtrain and diſable thoſe who avow principles that are deſtructive to the church and ſtate, and coercion in thoſe caſes is wiſe and neceſſary; but they can never convince any body: they may tie up men's

men's hands and tongues, but never reach their hearts; this is only to be done by enlightening the mind, and working properly upon the conſcience.

I muſt therefore, my reverend brethren, moſt earneſtly preſs you to be aſſiduous in the diſcharge of this part of your office: declaring at the ſame time, that I ſhall diſtinguiſh with my regards, ſuch miniſters and curates, as ſhall diſtinguiſh themſelves by their diligence upon this and the following head,

WHICH IS, FOURTHLY, the reviving of that almoſt antiquated exerciſe of *expounding the holy ſcriptures* to your congregations.

I am afraid the bulk of your people are very little acquainted with this *divine book*; ſome for want of inclination to read it, and others for want of proper helps for underſtanding it; and yet this is the book that *is able to make them wiſe unto ſalvation*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. *This book* is the great rule of their faith and practice, and according to this book they muſt be judged at the laſt day.

Who then ſhould teach them to underſtand it but their paſtors, who are called by that

that honourable name, becauſe they are to *feed their people with knowledge and underſtanding?* Jerem. v. 15. *For the prieſts lips ſhould keep knowledge, and they ſhould ſeek the law at his mouth, for he is the meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts,* Mal. ii. 7.

By this means you will by degrees lead thoſe into the knowledge of the holy ſcriptures, who will not be at the pains, or may want leiſure, to read them at home; or if they do read, yet for want of commentators are ſometimes at a loſs for the true ſenſe.

Let me add, that this exerciſe will be of no ſmall advantage even to yourſelves, as it will lay you under a neceſſity of ſtudying the word of God, which you are by profeſſion, and promiſe at your *ordination*, bound to do: For a clergyman can no more be unſkilful in the holy ſcriptures, without great ſhame and reproach, than a lawyer in the law.

The *epiſtles* and *goſpels*, and leſſons for the day, will furniſh you with choice of ſubjects for this work, which will become eaſy and familiar to the miniſter, after he has once made himſelf maſter of the ſenſe and connection: And the ſame notes will generally

ſerve, as the ſame portions return in an annual rotation.

But let me not be miſunderſtood: I am not recommending this as an additional taſk over and above the ſermon, but to be ſubſtituted ſometimes in the place of it, and which, in my judgment, will be more profitable: eſpecially if care be taken to make ſuch practical inferences and applications in the courſe of the expoſition, as may naturally ariſe out of the text. This will indeed make it a ſermon in another ſhape; with this difference only, that the variety of ſubjects and incidents will enliven the attention, and give a more agreeable, as well as inſtructive entertainment to the audience; who I dare ſay will come with a better appetite to this exerciſe when judiciouſly performed, and fill your churches better.

It will remain in the miniſter's diſcretion to interpoſe a ſermon when he pleaſes; but he will do well to note down thoſe Sundays, in order to expound in the following year thoſe portions of holy ſcripture which by this means were omitted.

And if the people were admoniſhed to bring their Bibles with them, according to the good old practice of our anceſtors, and

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to accompany the miniſter as he reads and expounds, they would underſtand and retain it better; and be enabled to ſpend an hour moſt profitably in recollecting and repeating to their families what they had heard at church.

If this cuſtom, practiſed in the times of *Puritaniſm*, was laid aſide in a licentious age, when all ſerioufneſs in religion grew out of faſhion, let us not be aſhamed to revive it; for it is no ſhame to learn that which is good, from any body. After all, if a ſermon in form ſhould, in compliance with cuſtom, be found indiſpenſible, it may however be ſhortened to allow for the time that had been ſpent in the expoſition.

I COME now to the SECOND general head I propoſed to ſpeak to, *viz.* your duty at large, and out of the houſe of God.

THE FIRST I ſhall mention is the *viſitation of the ſick*. And let me aſſure you, that this is a very critical office at certain conjunctures, and that great diſcretion is required for the right diſcharge of it; for there may be danger in adminiſtering either too much *fear*, or too much *hope*.

To awaken a ſick man to reflect upon his paſt life, and to call his ſins to remembrance in order to a particular repentance, will be of great uſe to him; but care muſt be taken, not to throw him into deſpair of God's mercy and forgiveneſs; for this will prevent his repentance, and ſhut the door of mercy againſt him.

On the other hand, to ſet only the mercy of God before him, and deal out hope too liberally, will be the way to make him ſecure at a time when his ſoul is in the utmoſt danger, and when repentance is all that he has for it. And bye-ſtanders will be too apt to lay hold of ſuch ſweet doctrine to their own undoing.

I am afraid it is too frequent for wicked livers, when they apprehend the approaches of death, to ſend for the miniſter in order to receive the communion and abſolution as a kind of paſsport, which they hope will do their buſineſs at once, and carry them by a ſhort way to heaven; and indeed this is a very ſhort way, if it would do. But alas! we do not find in the holy ſcriptures that the way is quite ſo eaſy; on the contrary, we find that repentance and a good life, are the only ſure foundation of hope and com-

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fort at the hour of death. For this reaſon a miniſter ought not to be too ready with his *abſolutions*; nor has he any warrant for it, unleſs the proofs of repentance be ſtrong, and *the ſick perſon humbly and earneſtly deſire it*; in which caſe only, the Rubric directs abſolution to be given.

And even then, it will be very proper for the miniſter to obſerve, that he has no power to forgive ſins abſolutely: but that all that he can do is to declare, for the comfort of the ſick, that God forgives him in caſe his repentance be ſincere, and his heart thoroughly changed.

I confeſs that when things are come to the laſt extremity, repentance is all that is in the power of a dying man, after a bad life: but God only knows, whether it be the meer effect of terror, or whether the heart be ſo changed as, in caſe of recovery, would have operated to a virtuous life. Charity, which *hopeth all things*, will make the beſt of it; but it is a very poor refuge; and as it would be cruel to refuſe a dying man that little comfort which his caſe may poſſibly admit, ſo it would encourage preſumption in the living to give too much.

But the caſe is quite otherwiſe with regard to a virtuous and godly man in his laſt moments; here none of theſe cautions are neceſſary, but the miniſter may ſafely pour the oil of joy and hope with profuſion into his ſoul.

But the viſitation of the ſick, is only an occaſional branch of a paſtor's duty, and there is another of much greater importance and extent, and that is,

Secondly, His viſiting all his pariſhioners at their houſes in a ſtated and a regular courſe. By this means only can he learn the true ſtate of their ſouls, and all their ſpiritual wants. In the church he is to ſpeak, and they to hear only; but his familiar converſation will give them an opportunity of ſpeaking in their turns, and of opening to him their doubts and ſcruples of conſcience, their fears, their temptations, and their ignorance; and he will take fit occaſions to admoniſh and reprove them privately, without expoſing them to ſhame, according to our Saviour's advice. The tenderneſs and regard to the character and credit of an offender, muſt naturally tend to ſoften and reclaim him; but if after repeated admonitions he ſhould prove obſti-

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nate and incorrigible, then, and not till then, is he to be put to open ſhame. *Preſentments, excommunications, judicial cenſures and penances*, are always to be the laſt reſort, when private admonitions and expoſtulations have been repeated without effect.

If there be domeſtic quarrels and diſſentions, the diſcreet advice of the miniſter may heal them, and reſtore unity and peace, and mutual affection between huſband and wife, parents and children, brethren and ſiſters. If reciprocal paſſions, or ill offices, have ſet neighbours and friends at variance, and given riſe to vexatious proſecutions and law-ſuits, (which are often occaſioned by a meer miſunderſtanding of one another, or by malicious whiſpers and inſinuations) he will ſet things in a better light, and mollify them to a better temper; and bring them to decide their differences by the cheap and chriſtian way of *arbitration*, to the ſaving of families from utter ruin. And indeed I have obſerved that when once a miniſter has by his diſcreet, peaceable, and upright behaviour, eſtabliſhed himſelf in the good opinion and confidence of his pariſhioners, he becomes from that time a general *arbiter*,

and judge among them, and all their little ſtrifes are readily ſubmitted to his deciſion.

By the ſame means alſo he will learn if the worſhip of God be kept up in families, as it ought; he will diſcover what good books are uſed among them, and what bad ones, which may tend to corrupt their principles and manners. He will find if *ſeducers* have been privately at work in his pariſh, to practiſe on the ignorant and unſtable, and lead them aſtray; and this will give him an opportunity to ſet them right and fortify them. And I fear there was never more occaſion for the vigilance of miniſters in this caſe, than in theſe days, when the flock of Chriſt is beſet with wolves of various denominations.

To name no more, he will learn from his own eye-ſight, the diſtreſſes and wants of the poor families in his pariſh, which will move him both to extend his own charity, and to ſolicit that of others for their relief.

Theſe and a thouſand other good ends are to be obtained, only by the diligence of a paſtor in viſiting his pariſhioners at their houſes; ſo that if he ſhould content himſelf with officiating in the church only, and having

having barely a *face* knowledge of them, he will leave a great part of his duty undone.

It is incredible how far this practice would go towards reforming the people, and eſpecially thoſe of the lower rank; for though he is doing no more than his bare duty, yet they would miſtake it for a great honour and condeſcenſion on his part, to viſit them familiarly in their homely cottages; and by thus gaining their hearts, he would find them ſoft to his good impreſſions, and patient under his reproofs.

I hope, therefore, my reverend Brethren, that you will be particularly aſſiduous in this branch of your duty: and that for the more eaſy and effectual performance of it, you will divide your reſpective pariſhes into convenient diſtricts, to be viſited by you in a ſtated courſe.

NEED I obſerve to you, in the THIRD AND LAST PLACE, that the *example* of a virtuous and holy life in a miniſter, will have more effect upon his people than a thouſand diſcourſes from the pulpit, be they never ſo excellent.

The bulk of mankind are much eaſier led by the eye, than the ear; and though he

ſhould preach like an angel, yet they will deſpiſe his doctrine, if they do not read it in his life: But when he ſhews himſelf *in all things a pattern of good works*, and preſents in his own life a fair copy of all thoſe graces and virtues which he recommends from the pulpit; his people will believe him to be in good earneſt, and that his ſincere aim is to ſave their ſouls as well as his own. His humility, meekneſs, and forgiveneſs, his charity and moderation, his temperance and ſobriety, his grave, prudent, and peaceable behaviour, his encouragement of religion and devotion in his own family, will procure reverence and authority to his perſon, attention to his preaching, and a zeal to imitate his virtues: They will think ſuch a *labourer worthy of his hire*, and he muſt be of a very perverſe temper indeed, who will not chearfully render him his dues.

I muſt here make one obſervation, which moſt naturally ariſes out of this head; and that is the indiſpenſible duty of *reſiding* on your reſpective cures; for it is of the nature of examples to be *preſent* and before the eye; ſo that a miniſter who does not live among his flock, can never be an example to them. I might

I might here mention, as a lower conſideration, the convenience of reſidence to yourſelves; not only for the better improvement of your glebes, and the providing of more comfortable habitations for yourſelves and ſucceſſors, and being in the midſt of your buſineſs; but alſo for avoiding all pretences of withholding from you your legal dues.

When a miniſter is not reſident, either in perſon or by his curate, the pariſhioners are ready to plead (and indeed with too much colour) that they do not receive the *valuable conſideration* of their tithes.

In ſtrictneſs of law, there is no foundation for this plea, becauſe tithes are not the *property* of the tenant or the landlord, but free *donations* to the church by the piety of ancient times, which by unlucky accidents are fallen into the hands of meer laymen, who can do no *ſpiritual ſervice* for the ſame: and in fact, all eſtates ſubject to tithes were tranſmitted, or purchaſed, ſubject to this incumbrance; for which the purchaſer muſt have paid a greater price, and the farmer a higher rent, if they had been *tithe-free*. Every man therefore muſt conſider himſelf, not as a poſſeſſor in *property*, but as a *truſtee*

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of the tenth part of the produce; which he holds in truſt for the uſe of the pariſh-miniſter, and which he cannot without injuſtice withhold and apply to his own uſe, ſince he has no title to it.

And the caſe is become the ſame where there are lay impropriators, and yet theſe receive their tithes with leſs grumbling and oppoſition, though they can neither *pray* nor *preach* as a conſideration for the ſame.

The non-reſidence therefore of the miniſter, or even his neglects of duty, are a mere pretence ſet up againſt paying tithes; and I am afraid that if he would graciouſly remit his dues, too many of theſe clamourers would readily diſpenſe with his reſidence.

But give me leave to obſerve, on the other hand, that if in law the miniſter be intitled to his tithes, the pariſhioners are in *good conſcience*, and by the rules of the goſpel, and the will of the donor, intitled equally to his ſpiritual cares and labours in the execution of his office for the good of their ſouls. If he *reaps their carnal things*, it is in conſideration that he ſhall *ſow unto them ſpiritual things*; and as he is *partaker of the altar*, he is required *to wait at the altar*; 1 Cor. ix. 11, 13. and therefore if he proves

proves remiſs in the diſcharge of his duty, if he is not at hand to watch over his flock, to feed and to guard them, he muſt not wonder if they are untoward and difficult in the payment of their dues; for though the *law* be with him, yet they will juſtly ſet up the *equity* of the goſpel againſt him.

I cannot diſmiſs this general head without putting you in mind of one duty more, which, though it be not properly canonical and within my province, yet is truly of religious conſideration.

I am ſpeaking of that proviſion for your families, by a prudent management of your incomes, which every man is bound by the laws of God and of Nature to make. St *Paul*'s admonition in this caſe, is at leaſt as binding as any canon of our church: *If any one provide not for his own, and eſpecially for thoſe of his own houſe, he hath denied the faith, and is worſe than an infidel*, 1 Tim. v. 8.

And I am ſorry to obſerve, that the memories of many clergymen lie under juſt reproach for their neglect of this duty, which the laws of God and Nature oblige every man to do. If a clergyman happens to have a temporal eſtate, ſomething will remain for the ſupport of his family who ſur-

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vive him; but where his benefice is his only fond, he muſt want natural affection and juſtice, or to ſuppoſe the beſt, he muſt be void of all thought, who ſpends it as faſt as it comes in, without laying up ſome part of it for their ſupport. Whether it be owing to indolence, or bad management, or to idle projects, or whether his income be expended in entertainments and high living, falſly called hoſpitality, though it may more properly be called pride and oſtentation; yet it makes no difference with reſpect to them, when there is nothing left for their ſubſiſtence.

He would diſdain to be told, that the only refuge of his widow muſt be in ſome charity-houſe; and that his daughters, after being delicately bred, muſt be quartered as humble companions upon ſome good lady; where, if they are treated better than ſervants in point of ceremony and reſpect, yet their condition is ſo far worſe as they ſerve without wages; or if this ſhould not be their good fortune, they muſt be expoſed to ſnares and temptations, and at laſt perhaps fall a prey to ſome rich invader of their virtue, for the ſake of a maintenance; I ſay, he would diſdain to be told this, and yet he is

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taking the ready way to bring things to this iſſue. For he well knows that he is only a tenant for life, and that as he ſpends all while he lives, all his funds muſt die with him.

How much better would it be for ſuch a one to retrench all ſuperfluities in good time, and enter upon a new oeconomy? What if he ſhould not treat with wine, and rival men of permanent fortunes in his entertainments? What if his wife and daughters were not to ſhine in ſilks, but be modeſtly clothed in decent ſtuffs, and the *ſavings* laid up for their fortunes, would any wiſe man think the worſe either of him or them? No, his prudence and their humility would be univerſally applauded, and would be ſet up as an example to other families in the like circumſtances.

I ſhould therefore think it a moſt laudable reſolution in every clergyman who is not poſſeſſed of a temporal eſtate, to lay up one half, or one third, or at the leaſt one quarter of his income, according as the thing will bear, for the future occaſions of his family; and to look upon ſuch *ſavings* as not at all his own, but *ſacred* to their uſe.

IT REMAINS only that I exhort you to that which is not ſo properly to be called a diſtinct and ſeparate head of duty, as a mode or quality that ought to run through all the reſt: I am ſpeaking of *zeal*, or that fervent deſire of doing good to the ſouls of your pariſhioners, which will animate and enliven every part of your duty. This is oppoſed to that *indolence* and *lukewarmneſs* of ſpirit, which always proceeds with indifference and *ſlothfulneſs in buſineſs*; which does what is barely required, and no more, and therefore generally underdoes in every thing. To ſuch tempers every thing goes up hill and againſt the grain; and is performed as if it were a *taſk*, which is done only becauſe it muſt be done.

But a principle of *zeal* will turn our duty into delight, and make us active and diligent; it will overcome all difficulties, and ſpare no pains in promoting the honour of God, and the ſalvation of thoſe ſouls that are committed to our charge. Our Saviour gives *John* the character of a *burning and ſhining light*, John v. 35. *ſhining* by the light of his doctrine, and *burning* by the warmth and activity of his zeal, and the ſame ſhould be the character of every miniſter of the goſpel.

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In order therefore to excite you to the effectual diſcharge of your ſpiritual offices with this laudable temper of mind, I ſhall, as I propoſed, lay before you ſome *motives* and conſiderations, which if duly attended to, cannot fail of ſucceſs.

THE FIRST ſhall be taken from the nature of that truſt, which with your own conſent has been committed to you. The ſouls of your pariſhioners are your immediate charge, and you are to guide them in the way to eternal ſalvation. Hence it is, that the office of a miniſter is repreſented in the holy ſcriptures under metaphors and characters importing a very high truſt.

You are called *ſhepherds*, who are to feed the flock of Chriſt by enlightening their minds with the knowledge of divine truths, to eſtabliſh their faith, and influence them to the practice of virtue. *Simon ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou me?* ſays our Saviour, *Feed my ſheep*, John xxi. 16. which he repeats three times. The truſt is comprized in three words, but ſo big with important matter as might fill a volume. However, you may obſerve the principle and ſpring from whence it is inferred and inforced, *loveſt thou me*; ſtrongly implying, that wherever there is a true

true love for our bleſſed Saviour, it will naturally operate by a *zeal* for promoting the ſalvation of thoſe ſouls for whom he ſhed his moſt precious blood.

As *ſhepherds*, you are likewiſe inſtructed to guard your flocks from ſpiritual enemies and dangers, eſpecially as they are ſurrounded with thoſe who will be aſſiduous to pervert and corrupt both their faith and manners. For this reaſon a good *paſtor* will always have an eye upon his flock, to confirm thoſe that are wavering, and to reclaim and recover ſuch as have been led aſtray, being ſeduced by *cunning men, who lay in wait to deceive*; for thoſe wolves have ever haunted about Chriſt's fold.

And it is in the ſame view and for the ſame purpoſes that you are called *watchmen*; for you are to watch over the faith and morals of your people, and guard them againſt infidelity, idolatry, falſe doctrines, corrupt religions, evil cuſtoms, and immoral practices. *Son of man*, ſays God to the Prophet; *I have made thee a watchman over the houſe of Iſrael*; and the end follows, namely, to *warn the wicked from his evil way.* St *Paul* takes up the alluſion, *Heb.* xiii. 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you, for they watch for your ſouls.* And

And here I cannot but repeat the hint of the neceſſity of reſidence, which is ſo clearly and ſtrongly implied in thoſe metaphors; for an abſent and rambling *ſhepherd* muſt needs neglect the ſafety of his flock, and a *watchman* or centinel will be puniſhed if he leaves his poſt.

And lastly, to name no more, you are *ſtewards of the myſteries of God*, 1 Cor. iv. 1. and diſpenſers of the means of ſalvation in his church. The church is Chriſt's *houſhold* or family; and it is your office to adminiſter their ſpiritual food to them, *even the ſincere milk of the word*, that ſo they may *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of God their Saviour*.

Now theſe metaphors of a *ſhepherd*, a *watchman*, and a *ſteward*, expreſs in a moſt ſignificant and lively manner, the nature of that truſt which is committed to every one who has taken upon him the holy character; and ſhew that he is reſponſible for the ſouls of his pariſhioners.

And as every truſt muſt one time or other be accounted for, this leads me to the other *motive*, proper to excite you to a zealous and diligent diſcharge of your office; namely, That you will moſt certainly be called to a

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ſtrict account for the ſame. This is ſtrongly urged by St *Paul*, in the place before-mentioned, as an argument both to miniſters and people to diſcharge their duties reciprocally; Obey them that rule over you, for they watch for your ſouls, *as thoſe who muſt give account.*

And what account will a lukewarm, ſlothful and negligent miniſter give at that day, if his unhappy pariſhioners ſhould turn evidences againſt him, and in excuſe for their own faults, plead that they miſcarried through his neglect? Will he plead his obedience to the canons and rubrics, and that he performed every ſervice which the letter of the law required? Let me aſſure you, my reverend Brethren, that this plea will not be admitted before the great Judge, and that the Father and Lover of ſouls requires much more at your hands.

Canons and Rubrics are uſeful inſtruments for keeping up *external diſcipline, order and decency* in an eſtabliſhed church; and it is ſmall merit in a clergyman to obey theſe, becauſe he will be expoſed to eccleſiaſtical cenſures for his neglect. But if he contents himſelf with this *legal obſervance*, and goes no further, he will be *found wanting* when he comes to be *weighed in the balance*. His heart

heart and ſoul muſt be ſet upon his work, he muſt give up the beſt of his time and pains to it, labouring *in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon*, 2 Tim. iv. 2. performing many things as a volunteer, which laws do not, and cannot preſcribe; or he will never ſtand the inquiſition of the great day, but be ranked in the number of *unprofitable ſervants*. This day of *reckoning* muſt come; it is what you preach to others, and it is what you ſhould ſeriouſly conſider yourſelves, *leſt after preaching to them you yourſelves ſhould be caſt-aways*, 1 Cor. ix. 27.

But as dreadful as this day will prove to ſlothful and merely canonical paſtors, it will be no leſs joyful and happy to thoſe who have been zealous and diligent in ſaving the ſouls committed to their charge. With what pleaſure will every ſuch miniſter appear at the head of his happy flock before the great Shepherd, and in his own words ſay, *Thoſe thou gaveſt me I have kept, and none of them is loſt!* The light of his doctrine, and the living light of his example, did not ſhine in vain even with reſpect to himſelf, before his people, *for they that turn many to righteouſneſs ſhall ſhine as the ſtars for ever and ever*, Dan. xii. 3.

If any further motive were neceſſary, tho' one would think it ſhould not, you may turn

to the office of *ordination*, and refreſh your memories with the ſolemn promiſes you made at your admiſſion to the order of prieſts; and I would earneſtly adviſe every clergyman to read over that office once at leaſt in every year, becauſe ſtale promiſes are too apt to be forgotten.

Having thus, my reverend Brethren, delivered my thoughts to you, though very imperfectly, upon ſome of the chief branches of your ſacred function, I hope you will receive them favourably, and that they will not be quite unprofitable; and eſpecially to ſuch of you as have not long been admitted to the cure of ſouls.

I ſhall by God's aſſiſtance endeavour to cooperate with you for promoting the great ends of your miniſtry; I ſhall rejoice to live in harmony and a good underſtanding with you; I ſhall be happy in your eſteem and affection, and in giving you the beſt proofs of mine. If any of you ſhould need admonition, you will remember that it is my duty to give it, and yours to take it in good part: and I hope always to give it in the ſpirit of meekneſs, and with a due regard to the dignity of your character. I ſhall be apt to take good impreſſions of you, and ſlow to believe things unworthy of you, and would hope that

this

this diſpoſition of charity and benevolence will be mutual. I ſhall chearfully aſſiſt you, as far as I am capable, with my advice, and with my prayers in your behalf; and I hope I ſhall not want the benefit of your advice as there ſhall be occaſion; and eſpecially of your prayers, that God will enable me by his grace to diſcharge faithfully the great truſt committed to me, for the promotion of his glory and the edification of this dioceſe: that ſo when the great Shepherd ſhall require an account of the flocks committed to our charge, you and I may be able to give it up with chearfulneſs, and *enter into the joy of our Lord.*

I ſhall conclude with thoſe awful words of God to the prophet *Ezekiel* in his 33d chapter. *O ſon of man, I have ſet thee a watchman unto the houſe of Iſrael; therefore thou ſhalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I ſay unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou ſhalt ſurely die; if thou doſt not ſpeak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man ſhall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand. Nevertheleſs, if thou warn the wicked of his way, to turn from it; if he doth not turn from his way, he ſhall die in his iniquity, but thou haſt delivered thy ſoul.*

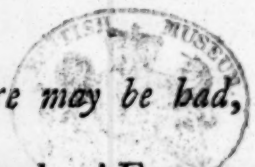
FINIS.

Lately Publiſhed,

TRACTATUS de Viſitatione Infirmorum, ſeu de eis Parochorum Officiis, quæ Infirmos et Moribundos reſpiciunt. In gratiam Juniorum, et in Viſitandis Infirmis minus Exercitatorum Editus.

Authore, JOHANNE STEARNE, S. T. D.

Londini: Proſtant apud *J. Bird*, in Vico dicto Ave-Maria-Lane.



Where may be had,

Des. Eraſmi Roterdami ECCLESIASTES, ſive Concionator Evangelicus. Liber Primus. Cui præfigitur Diſſertatio Præliminaris.

Per T. B. S. Th. Prof.